

Introduction

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Ghent University has been involved in fieldwork in Thorikos for more than 50 years. In 1960, H. Mussche investigated the maritime fortifications on the A. Nikolaos peninsula as a Belgian member of the Ecole Française d'Athènes. Large-scale excavations started on 7th October 1963 with the participation of other Belgian Universities, principally the Université de Liège and the Université Libre de Bruxelles. After 16 campaigns, the excavations came to a temporary halt in 1990.¹

In 1997, a team of topographers of Ghent University under the *aegis* of the late M. Oikonomakou measured an area of approximately 7 km² in the valley between Lavrio and Plaka (De Wulf 2000; see also Van Liefferinge, Stal, De Wulf, this volume). In 2000, a short control excavation was conducted near the top of the Velatouri hill, again under the *aegis* of M. Oikonomakou (see Van Gelder, this volume). In 2006 and 2007, a small team of Ghent University undertook cleaning operations in the Theatre area and the Industrial Quarter, closely coordinated with the Greek archaeological and heritage authorities (see van de Put, Docter, this volume). Fieldwork in 2008 consisted of an intensive topographic survey on the lower slopes of the Velatouri Hill with a focus upon the Theatre area and the Industrial Quarter (see Van Liefferinge, Stal, De Wulf, this volume).² In 2009, two team members from Ghent University, L. Verdonck and G. Dierkens, executed a large-scale Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey for the University of Liège, under the direction of R. Laffineur, on the south slopes of the Velatouri hill (see Van Liefferinge, Stal, De Wulf, this volume, p. 9, fig. 4). Since 2010, small-scale excavations are being conducted in a large cistern in the Industrial Quarter in the frame of a wider study on water management in the Laurion area (see Van Liefferinge *et al.*; Docter, Monsieur, van de Put; and Mortier, this volume).

From the start, the excavators took great care to make the results of their investigations accessible to the academic community as swiftly and extensively as possible. After a large preliminary article on the first, 1963 campaign in *l'Antiquité Classique* (Mussche *et al.* 1965), a series of preliminary reports was started (*Thorikos* I–IX).³ Also, a series of final reports was conceived, *Fouilles de Thorikos* (*FdTb*), in which three volumes have appeared to date: Labarbe 1977, Mussche 1998, and Vanhove

¹ For a *status quaestionis* on the earlier fieldwork in Thorikos, one may refer to Mussche 1998.

² The campaign lasted only six days, from 31 March to 5 April 2008. The team consisted of Roald Docter, Kim Van Liefferinge, Steven Hast, Cornelis Stal, Guy Dierkens and Thomas Pieters.

³ Please, note that *Thorikos* I (reporting on the first campaign) appeared only after the publication of *Thorikos* II and III.

2006. A few more are currently in preparation.⁴ At the same time a series of small volumes on miscellaneous subjects related to Thorikos and the wider Attic territory was devised, the *Miscellanea Graeca (MIGRA)*, in which nine volumes have been published since: Mussche, Spitaels, Goemaere-De Poerck 1975, Gale *et al.* 1979, Vlietinck 1981, Mountjoy 1981, Spitaels 1982, Blondé 1983, Gallant 1985, Devillers 1988, and Mussche 1994.

Since the fieldwork came to a temporary halt in 1990, some important articles on Thorikos and its territory have been published outside these three Thorikos series.⁵ With the start of new fieldwork in Thorikos in 2006, the need for a more focused and visible publication channel was felt again. After consulting several stakeholders,⁶ it was decided to continue the old series of preliminary reports, albeit with a slightly changed title that would do more justice to its intended contents. The numbering of the old series has been kept, however, and will be continued with this first new volume as number 10.

The new fieldwork in Thorikos by Ghent University has been guided by five main principles:

1. It should be set in the perspective of a better understanding of the old excavations;
2. It should go hand-in-hand with the study and publication of the results of old excavations (both finds and architectural remains);
3. It should be followed by swift dissemination of the scientific results, a.o. in the shape of extensive preliminary publications;
4. It should benefit from close collaboration with specialists from other disciplines and other national and international (Greek and other) partners, research institutes and universities; and
5. It should provide undergraduate and graduate students with training in excavation and field-walking methods and techniques as well as finds processing.

⁴ A.o. on the (Proto)Geometric pottery of Thorikos and Attica by K. Van Gelder and on the transport amphorae of Thorikos by P. Monsieur. With volume 3 (Vanhove 2006), the series has been taken over by Peeters Publishers in Leuven, who is also responsible for the distribution of the other Thorikos series.

⁵ One may mention e.g. Mountjoy 1995, Rehren *et al.* 1999, and Rehren, Vanhove, Mussche 2002. Also other coherent finds groups from Thorikos have been presented outside the three Thorikos series, e.g. the lekanai (Lüdorf 2000) and the beehives (Lüdorf 1998/1999).

⁶ H. Mussche, P. Peeters of Peeters Publishers in Leuven, and the members of the 'Belgian Centre for Archaeological Research in Greece' (BCAOG / CBRAG) association, besides the members of the newly formed Thorikos team (A. De Wulf, K. Van Gelder, G. Dierkens, W. van de Put, K. Van Liefferinge, T. Pieters and S. Mortier).

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